

Midtown-St. Albans

Area Plan

Choosing a Path/Testing Options
Public Input Summary

Introduction

Midtown-St. Albans Plan

The purpose of Midtown-St. Albans area study is to provide detailed transportation, streetscape, urban design, and land use recommendations based on stakeholder input and a thorough understanding of community values, history, and future development scenarios.

The plan is exploring the following topics in detail:

Transportation - In addition to general mobility in and through the area, this includes making it safer and more comfortable to walk to typical destinations such as work, school, shopping, or parks. It also involves considering the impacts of traffic on neighborhood streets.

Public transportation - With additional transportation demand expected in the future, how can transit play a greater role in the area?

Stormwater - Considerations include how green infrastructure can address flooding issues and provide new public spaces.

Housing - This includes considering future housing needs and the possibility of providing greater housing variety to meet the needs of smaller households and residents at various stages of life. This can include exploring “missing middle” options such as townhomes, duplexes and small apartments, and accessory dwelling units.

Land use - How can the area’s growth provide housing and employment opportunities while also respecting the scale of existing residential neighborhoods?

Parks and public space - Are there opportunities to create new or enhanced public spaces in the Midtown area?

Midtown-St. Albans Plan Process Overview

The process includes five phases, as described below.

Visioning. Creating a common vision, understanding what topics need study.

Understanding the Area. This stage included significant public outreach aimed at testing initial visioning conclusions and focusing on specific

issues and opportunities in the area.

Choosing a Path/Testing Options. This phase involved gathering input on specific solutions for transportation, land use, urban design, stormwater, and other issues.

Final Recommendations. This involves refining and prioritizing recommended transportation and other infrastructure improvements, with cost and other considerations explored in depth. It also will include refined policy guidance for land use and other issues.

Adoption and Implementation. This last phase includes a review from the Planning Commission and City Council, which will be asked to adopt the plan recommendations.

Choosing a Path/Testing Options

This was the plan’s most crucial phase of input, a time when potential solutions are explained and tested. As such, it featured an extensive public input process that included online input and a series of public meetings.

In-person meetings took place on the following dates:

- “Big” meeting: May 11, Hilton North Raleigh
- “Big” meeting: May 20, Wake Tech Beltline Center

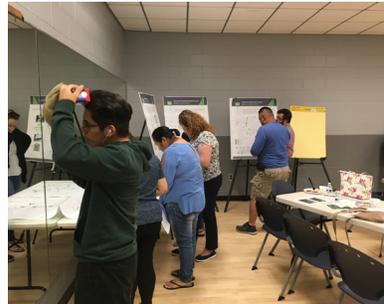
Other meetings included:

- Spanish-language meeting: May 14, Green Road Community Center
- Lunchtime “popup” event: May 15, North Hills
- Ice cream social: May 16, Coastal Credit Union
- Employee picnic, May 23, Duke Raleigh Hospital
- Saturday “popup” event: May 25, Midtown Farmers Market
- Evening “popup” event: June 12, HH Architecture

All meetings were open to the public, and more than 300 people attended in total. An online survey remained open in May and ran through June. Nearly 400 people provided input through the survey. In terms of demographics, most respondents live within the study area, with about a third living elsewhere. Thirty-five percent are younger than 35; 37 percent between 36 and 55; and 25 percent older than 55.

The meetings and survey focused on presenting a series of core concepts. For each concept - for instance, greenway and pedestrian network improvements - a poster-size board allowed participants to provide feedback (see example on right). In most cases, each broad concept include multiple specific projects. The greenway/pedestrian board, for example, showed different types of facilities - greenways, or on-street bicycle facilities - on different streets.

In the meetings, participants placed green dots (like), red dots (don't like) and purple dots (really like, please implement it soon) on the board. The same materials were placed online, and participants were able to use a sliding scale to indicate how much they liked the concept.



May Midtown plan events

Using this Summary

This document provides a quick summary of input received in the process. Both in-person and online input, where relevant, have been summarized for each major concept.

A quick summary is provided in a green box with each topic and a checkmark, "x," or question mark, depending on feedback

Concepts where the average response was at least two-thirds favorable or that otherwise received strong support are indicated with a green checkmark. Those that were poorly received, with less than a third of input in support, are indicated with a red "x". Those where input was mixed or unclear are indicated with an orange question mark.

Generally speaking, the concepts received support during the meeting phase. On the online survey, nearly all of the concepts were supported by at least two-thirds of the respondents, and some, particularly those that involved improving walkability and creating a waterfront district, received much more support than that.

A few items received mixed or significant negative feedback. Final plan proposals will be adjusted to reflect that input.



Strongly supported



Mixed or unclear



Not supported

Input Summary

Green Street Concepts

This concept aims to address three issues at once - safety for people walking or riding a bicycle, stormwater runoff, and traffic speeds. Essentially, it involves placing a greenway or greenway-like elements on wide streets that currently encourage higher speeds.

Input Summary
 The survey asked if the proposed locations are well-suited for green street features. The average response was 75 percent in support (see below). In-person input was similarly positive.




Input

Online input - Do you agree these are good locations for Green Streets?



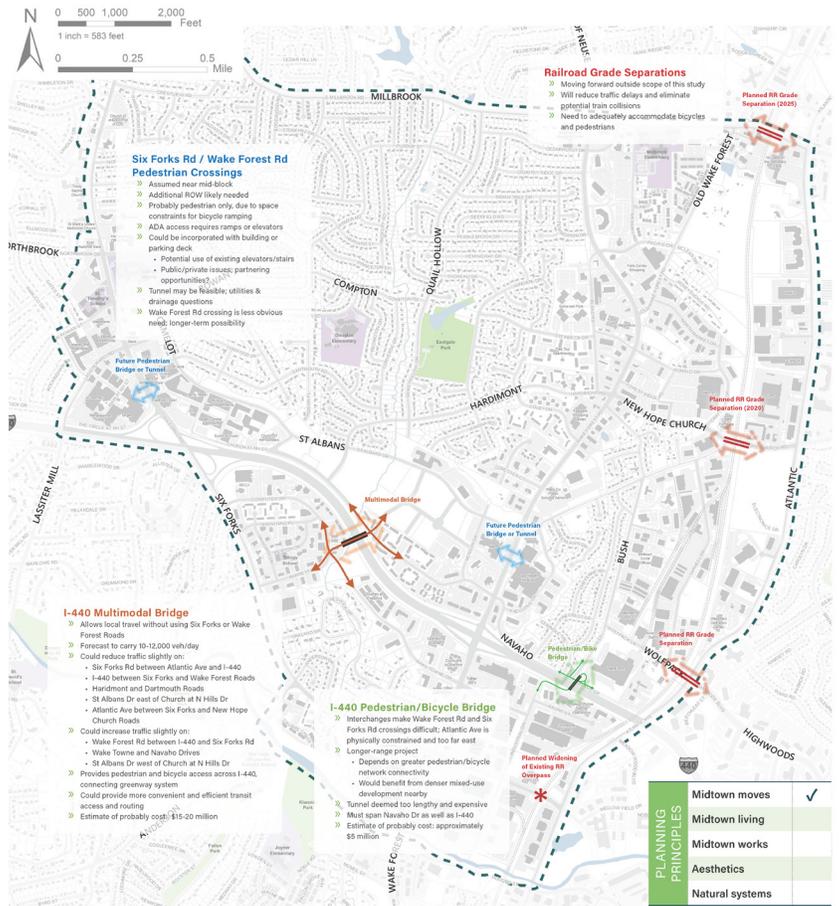
In-person input

Category	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CONCEPTS	1. In-Street Infiltration/Traffic Calming	4	7	0	0
	2. Commercial Green Street	2	0	6	0
	3. Stormwater Bumpouts	0	0	15	0
	4. Local Green Street w/ On-Street Parking and Shared Use Path	8	0	7	0
	5. Local Green Street w/ On-Street Parking and Separated Bike Lanes	22	0	4	0
PROS	1. Reduced Flooding	1	0	2	0
	2. More Bike and Pedestrian Options	2	2	5	0
	3. Traffic Calming	0	0	0	0
	4. Improved Comfort	0	0	0	0
CONS	1. May Reduce On-Street Parking	0	0	0	0
LOCATIONS	a. Computer Drive, Wake Towne Drive	2	1	4	0
	b. Bush Street	12	0	7	0
	c. Hardimont	18	7	10	0
	d. Quail Hollow	21	5	15	0

Bridge and Tunnel Concepts

The Beltline creates a major barrier for pedestrians and funnels vehicles to a few busy intersections. The plan proposes two new Beltline crossings, one a vehicle/pedestrian bridge between Wake Forest and Six Forks roads, the other a pedestrian/bicycle trail connection east of Wake Forest Road.

Input Summary
 Both crossings received strong support - the average level of support from online survey-takers for the vehicle/pedestrian bridge was 74 percent, with a nearly identical amount supporting the bike/ped crossing (see the results for the "Midtown Ring" to the right)

Input

Online input - How likely is it that the 440 crossing will make it easier to get around Midtown?

Average



Very Unlikely

Very Likely

In-person input

CONCEPTS

- Six Forks at North Hills
- I-440 Crossing
- Wake Forest @ St. Albans
- Bush
- RR Crossing @ Wolfpack
- RR Crossing @ Millbrook

31	3	46
34	1	17
16	3	31
29	0	13
3	0	4
9	0	10

BRIDGE V TUNNEL

- Bridge
- Tunnel

1	0	5
0	0	0

I-440 CROSSINGS

- Multi-modal
- Ped/Bike

2	0	4
2	0	17

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The "Midtown Ring"

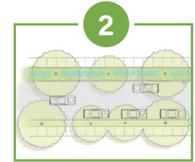
The Beltline and streets like Six Forks and Wake Forest roads are major barriers for people walking or riding a bicycle or scooter. The Midtown Ring is a safe and comfortable walking and biking network that connects neighborhoods with major destinations and the Crabtree greenway.

Input Summary

The Ring received strong support, with a support rating of 73 percent. In-person input was similar, although some expressed concern about the precise routing between the Beltline and Six Forks Road. The final recommendations will consider various options.



Greenway Extension



Green Street Elements



I-440 Crossing



Improved On-Street Bicycle Facilities

PLANNING PRINCIPLES	
Midtown moves	✓
Midtown living	✓
Midtown works	✓
Aesthetics	✓
Natural systems	✓

PROS

- Shorter Connections
- More Biking & Walking Options

CONS

- May Reduce On-Street Parking
- Greenway Susceptible to Flooding

Input

Online input - How likely is it that the Midtown Ring will make the area safer and more comfortable for people walking or biking?

Average



Very Unlikely

Very Likely

In-person input

CONCEPTS	Very Unlikely	Average	Very Likely
1. Greenway Extension	9	3	27
2. Green Streets Elements	15	0	2
3. I-440 Crossing	10	0	8
4. Improved On-Street Bicycle Facilities	11	1	7
PROS			
1. Shorter Connections	0	0	0
2. More Biking and Walking Options	1	0	5
CONS			
1. May Reduce On-Street Parking	0	0	0
2. Greenway Susceptible to Flooding	0	0	0
LOCATIONS			
a. South of I-440 near Anderson Drive	10	23	2
b. I-440 Crossing	6	0	7
c. St. Albans	4	2	11
d. Hardimont	5	1	0
e. Quail Hollow	7	1	2
f. Bush Street/Industrial Drive	5	1	11
ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS			
a. Anderson Drive @ Six Forks	1	0	15
b. Wolfpack to Highwoods (sidewalk connector)	1	1	2

Pedestrian Improvements

The previous items involve concepts that operate at an area-wide scale. However, focused pedestrian improvements at key intersections and other locations are also proposed as means of creating a more walkable Midtown. These include refuge islands, improved crosswalks, and other steps.

Input Summary
 Input supported these concepts, particularly crossings of 440 and Six Forks. Negative comments primarily involved maintenance of current sections of the Crabtree greenway. Major storms damaged an elevated section, and a permanent solution is being implemented.




Input

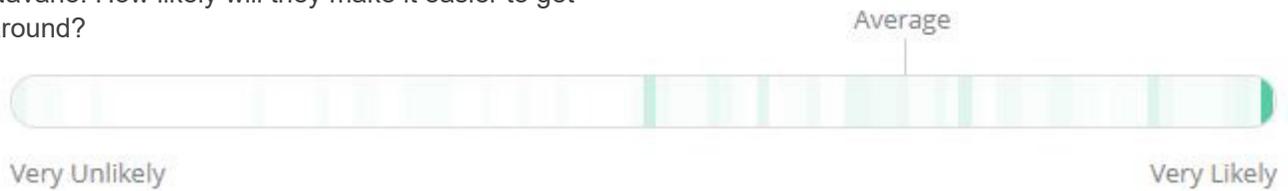
In-person input

CONCEPTS	1	2	3
1. Pedestrian Refuge Islands	13	3	7
2. Crosswalk & Visibility Enhancements	7	1	18
3. I-440 Crossing	0	0	23
4. Improved Ped Route Alternatives	1	1	13
PROS			
1. Improved Comfort	0	0	0
2. Shorter Connections	0	0	0
3. More Bike and Ped Options	0	0	5
4. Increased Safety	0	0	0
5. Traffic Calming	0	0	0
CONS			
1. May Reduce On-Street Parking	0	0	0
2. May Reduce Driveway Access	0	0	0
LOCATIONS			
a. Six Forks at North Hills	2	0	25
b. I-440 Crossing	11	1	6
c. St. Albans @ Wake Forest	1	5	2
d. Wake Forest @ Wegmans	1	0	1
e. Quail Hollow	10	3	3
f. Bush Street/Industrial Drive	6	0	11
ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS			
a. Millbrook from Wakeofrest to Atlantic	5	0	5
b. Crabtree Creek	0	12	0
c. Wake Forest just South of Falls of Neuse	0	4	0
d. Cheswick Drive (Anderson Drive)	0	8	4

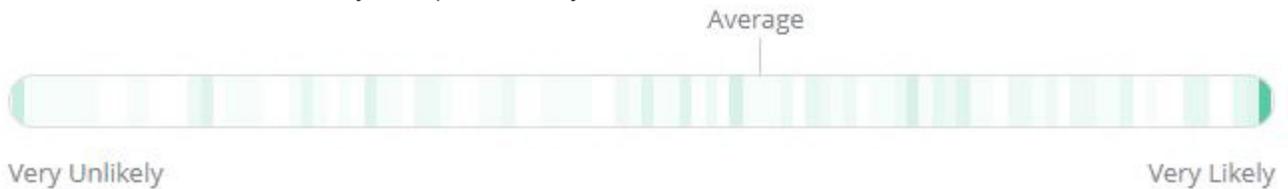
Connectivity and Access Management

Input

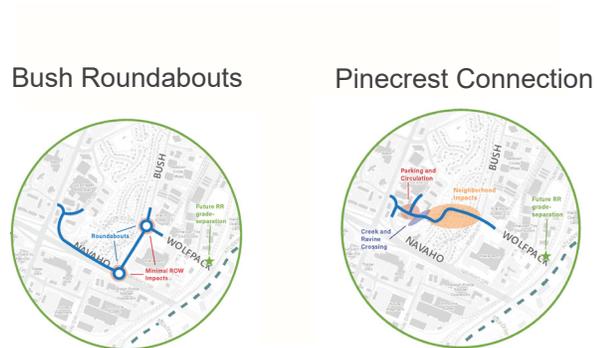
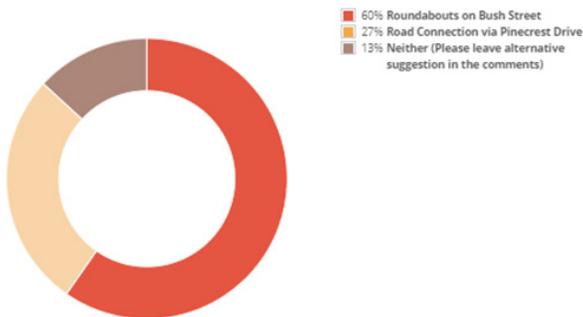
Online input - Street Extensions - Six Forks and Navaho. How likely will they make it easier to get around?



Online input - Shift two lanes from Wake Forest Road to Bland Road. How likely to improve safety?



Online input - Bush Roundabouts/Pinecrest Connection. Which do you prefer?



In-person input

CONCEPTS

Wake Forest/Bland Pair	0	16	0
Atlantic	7	0	0
Navaho to Wolfpack Option A Traffic Circles	8	1	3
Navaho to Wolfpack Option B New Street	7	3	5
Six Forks Connection to Capital	4	2	4
Six Forks @ North Hills	0	5	13
South of I-440, east of Wake Forest	0	44	1
I-440 Bridge Connection @ Greenway	14	0	9

Potential BRT Connections to Downtown

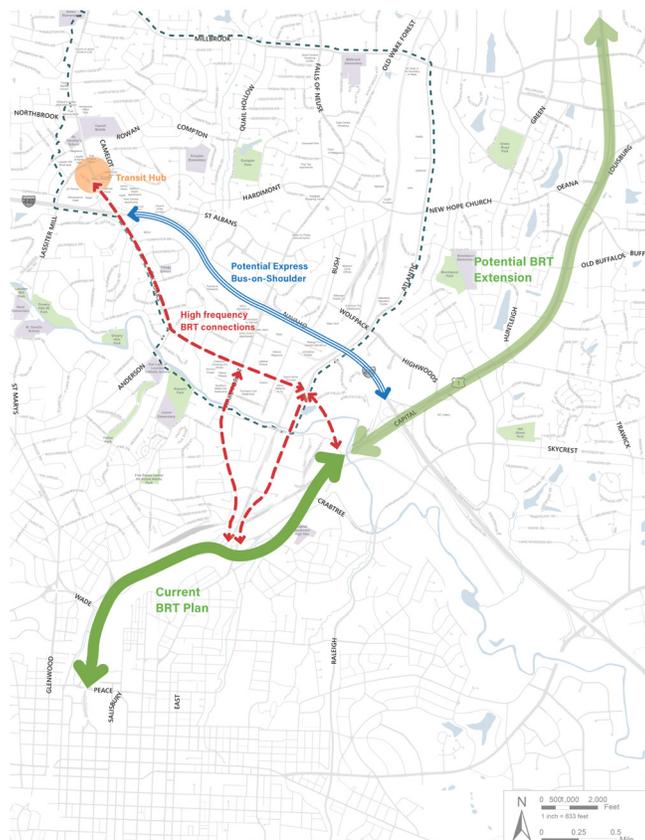
Midtown can benefit from a connection to future bus rapid transit infrastructure along Capital Boulevard. The primary proposal is a new high-frequency bus route that connects to the BRT either along Six Forks, Wake Forest, or Atlantic. A second phase would extend BRT infrastructure to North Hills.

Input Summary

Participants were asked how likely they would be to use frequent transit to downtown and a future BRT connection to downtown. The average online response was midway between unlikely and likely, although a higher percentage provided favorable comments in person.



Note: Unlike with other questions, the online survey asked how likely it is a respondent would personally use BRT, not whether they it would be a good idea or achieve a specific goal. It is likely that the average response for those questions would have been higher. However, the average response still indicates a high level of potential ridership, making it a good candidate for final recommendations.



Input

Online input: How likely would you be to use BRT?

Average



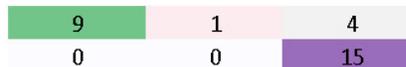
Very Unlikely

Very Likely

In-person input

OPTIONS

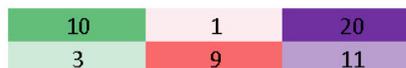
Six Forks Transit Hub
Potential BRT Extension



Potential BRT Connections to Downtown

OPTIONS

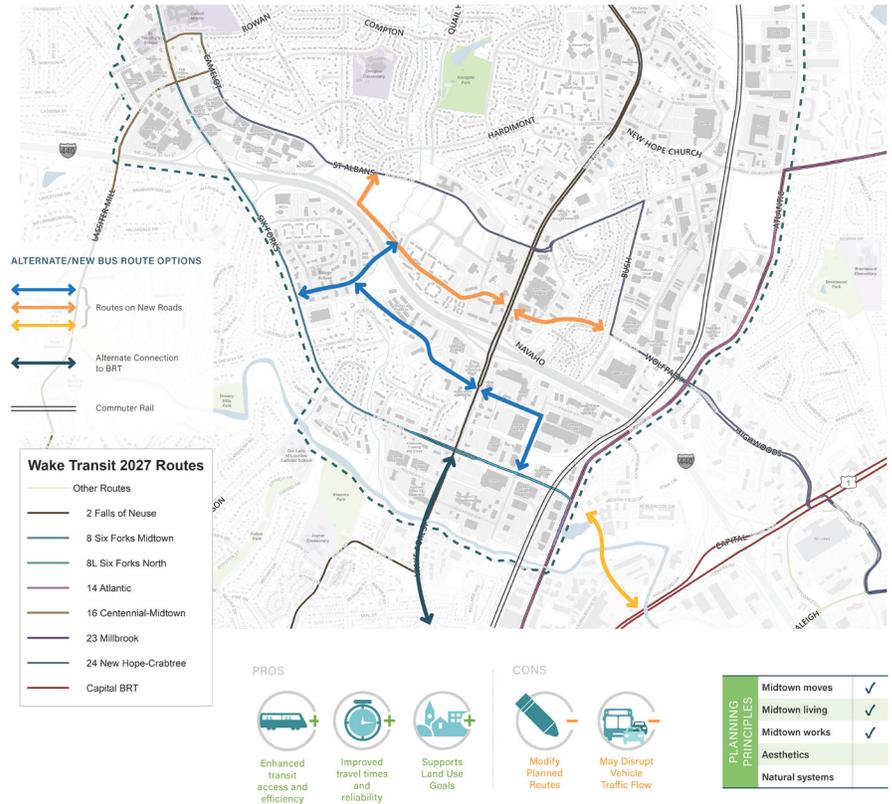
Commuter Rail
BRT



Transit Improvements

The proposed 440 crossing between Six Forks and Wake Forest, as well as other new street connections, creates the possibility for new transit routes that better serve the area and offer quicker trips. Exact routes were not shown, but potential options were outlined.

Input Summary
 This topic generated less input than others, likely because of the lack of specificity, but did receive support from those who weighed in.

Input

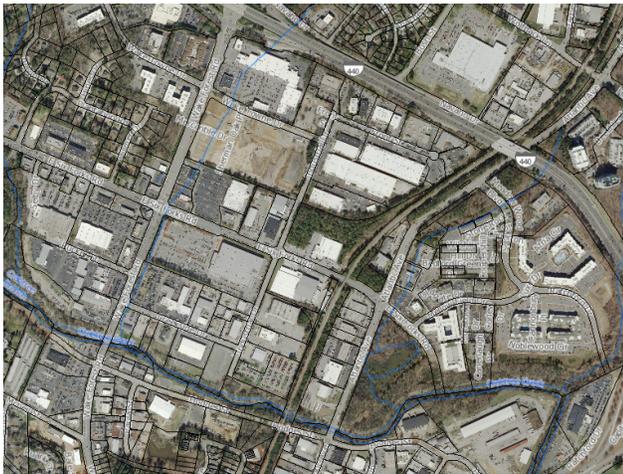
In-person input

CONCEPTS	4	0	2
1. Alternate BRT	4	0	2
2. Enhanced Bus Service	1	0	2
3. Blue Route	7	0	0
PROS			
Enhanced Transit	0	0	6
Improved Travel times and reliability	0	0	0
Supports Land Use Deals	0	0	0
CONS			
Modify Planned Routes	0	0	0
May Disrupt Vehicle Traffic Flow	0	0	0

Land Use Focus Area: Crabtree

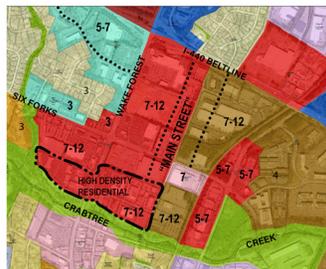
This concept focuses on the area between the Beltline and the Crabtree waterway. It has three primarily elements:

- 1) Creating a walkable “main street” feel along Industrial Drive. The street would terminate at a new entrance to the Crabtree waterway and greenway.
- 2) Create a Midtown waterfront district. Currently, the area turns its back on the Crabtree. The plan proposes to reverse that with a combination of public investments along the waterfront and rethinking land uses adjacent to the waterway.
- 3) Create a balance of uses. Currently, the area is dominated by retail and warehouse uses. The plan would seek to encourage more housing.
- 4) Create height transitions down to lower-scale adjacent residential areas.



CRABTREE / WAKE FOREST

- HIGH INTENSITY HOUSING WITH GREEN SPACE
- FLOODPLAIN / STORMWATER ENHANCEMENT
- IMPROVED ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- IMPROVED WALKABILITY WITH A “MAIN STREET”



4/5

In-person input: Land use focus areas

Wake Forest/Falls of Neuse	6	0	2
Atlantic/St. Albans	8	0	5
I-440 Crossing/Six Forks	8	0	2
Crabtree/Wake Forest	4	0	1
Community Enhancement/Higher Intensity Dev.	2	0	4
"Missing Middle" Housing	5	1	9

Walkable Main Street/Waterfront District

This proposal envisions Industrial Drive evolving over time into Midtown’s Main Street. The southern end would terminate at a new gateway to the Crabtree greenway.

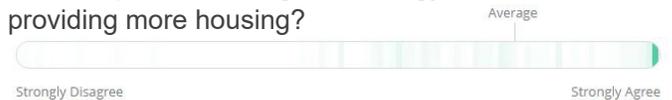
Online input - A good strategy for public spaces?



Create a balance of uses

The area currently includes large amounts of retail. In order to create a better balance of uses and provide more housing opportunities, does it make sense to shift future land use toward housing?

Online input - Is this a good strategy for providing more housing?



Specify height and transitions

The plan would be more specific about height in the area. Height could be up to 12 stories in the core, then drop down to three stories on the edges.

Online input - A good approach to height and scale?



Input Summary

This topic generated some of the strongest support of any of the proposed concepts. Participants strongly agreed (82 percent average) that the Main Street/Waterfront District idea is a good strategy. The mix of uses received a 77 percent strongly agree average, and the height transitions 75 percent. The concept received in-person support as well.

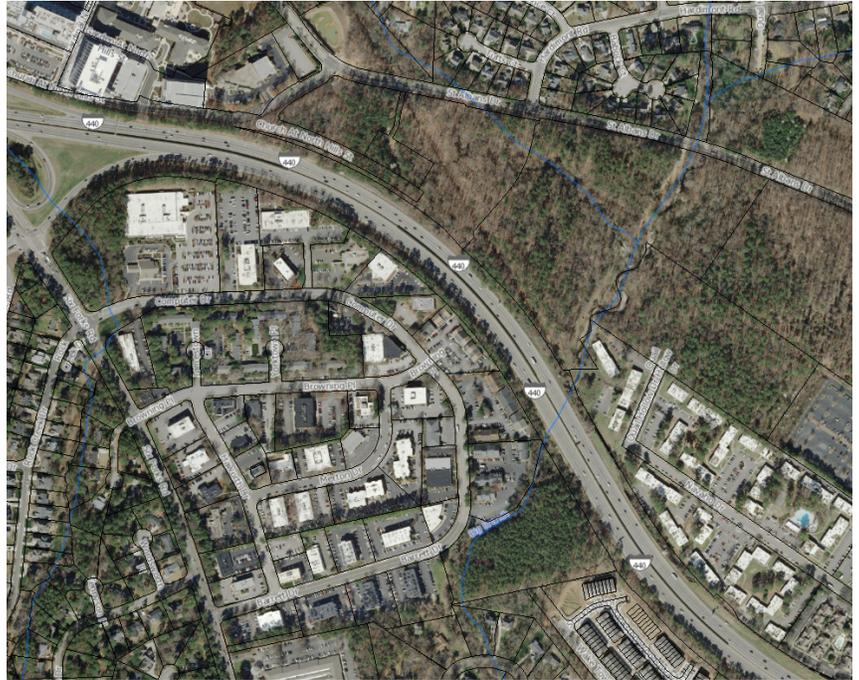


Land Use Focus Area: I-440 Crossing/Six Forks

This concept builds on the 440 crossing. It accommodates additional housing and employment opportunities south of 440, while including height transitions down from North Hills, where 20-story buildings are planned. Height would step down from 20 stories immediately next to 440 to three stories along Six Forks Road, thereby respectign the scale of the residential neighborhood on the west.

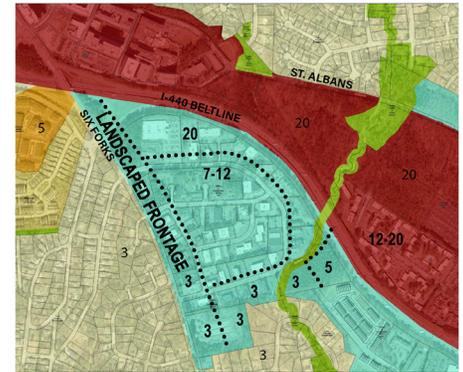
Input Summary

Survey respondents agreed the proposal was a reasonable way to provide more housing and employment options while respecting neighborhood scale (67 percent average). It received no red dots during in-person meetings.



I-440 CROSSING / SIX FORKS

- EMPLOYMENT FOCUS
- HIGH INTENSITY OFFICE
- IMPROVED MOBILITY / ACCESS
- IMPROVED WALKABILITY
- GREEN CORRIDOR EDGE



Input

Online input - Reasonable approach to adding housing and employment opportunities?

Average 67 / 100



Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

In-person input: Land use focus areas

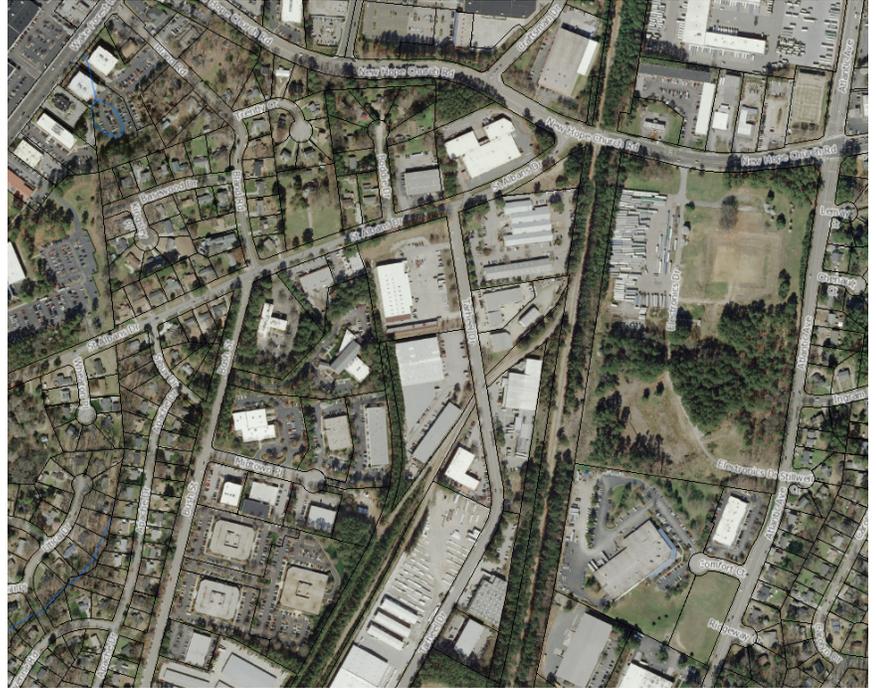
Wake Forest/Falls of Neuse	6	0	2
Atlantic/St. Albans	8	0	5
I-440 Crossing/Six Forks	8	0	2
Crabtree/Wake Forest	4	0	1
Community Enhancement/Higher Intensity Dev.	2	0	4
"Missing Middle" Housing	5	1	9

Land Use Focus Area: St. Albans-Atlantic

The study has found that demand for industrial uses is dropping, while housing demand is high. The proposal for this area involve shifting future land uses along St. Albans Drive between Bush and Atlantic from industrial to housing, with a height of five stories, dropping to four stories next to existing residential areas.

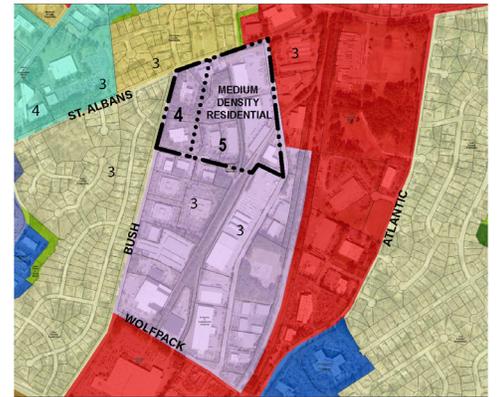
Input Summary

As with the other land use focus area proposals, this received strong support. Survey respondents agreed the proposal would help provide housing in the area (72 percent average). It received no red dots during in-person meetings.



ATLANTIC / ST. ALBANS

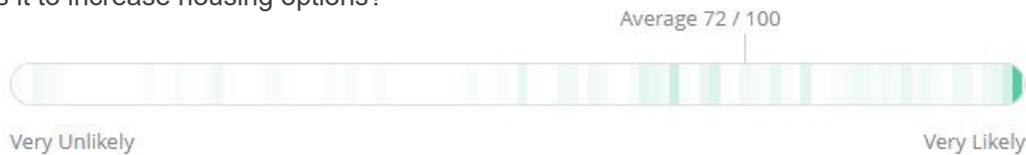
- CONVERT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE TO HOUSING
- ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS NEAR EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- "MISSING MIDDLE" OPPORTUNITIES



2

Input

Online input - How reasonable is this and how likely is it to increase housing options?

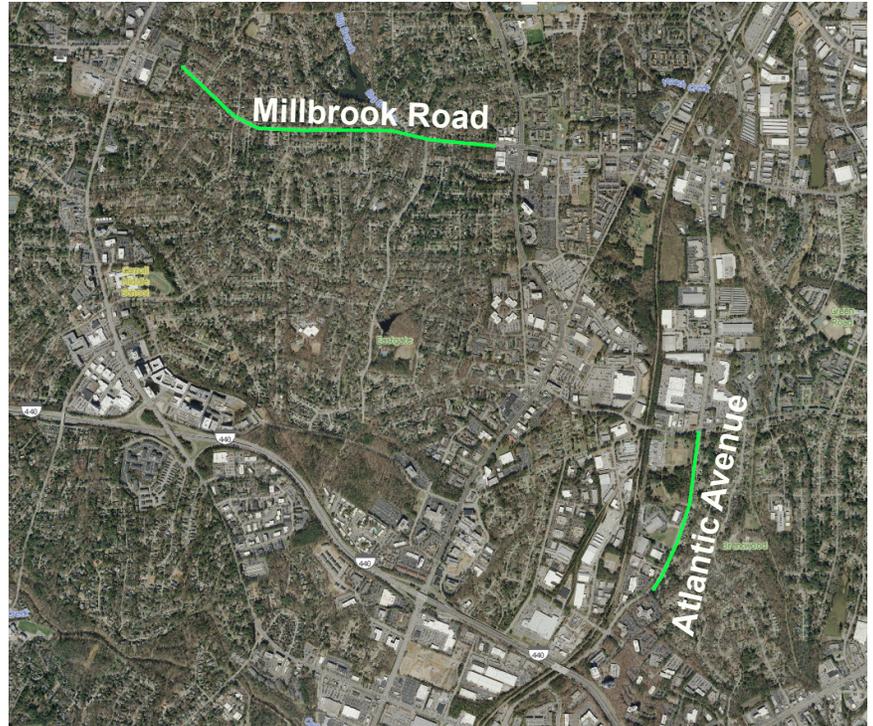


In-person input: Land use focus areas

Wake Forest/Falls of Neuse	6	0	2
Atlantic/St. Albans	8	0	5
I-440 Crossing/Six Forks	8	0	2
Crabtree/Wake Forest	4	0	1
Community Enhancement/Higher Intensity Dev.	2	0	4
"Missing Middle" Housing	5	1	9

Land Use Focus: “Missing Middle” Housing

One way to provide additional housing options is with “gentle density” – duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, or townhouses – that are the same scale as typical detached houses but are relatively more affordable. The plan proposes this approach in a few locations, including the properties directly along major streets such as Millbrook Road



Input Summary

The concept received solid support. The average agree/disagree rating was 67 percent. The proposal received also received a substantial number of purple “do it now” dots.



Input

Online input - Reasonable way to improve affordability and provide additional housing options?



In-person input: Land use focus areas

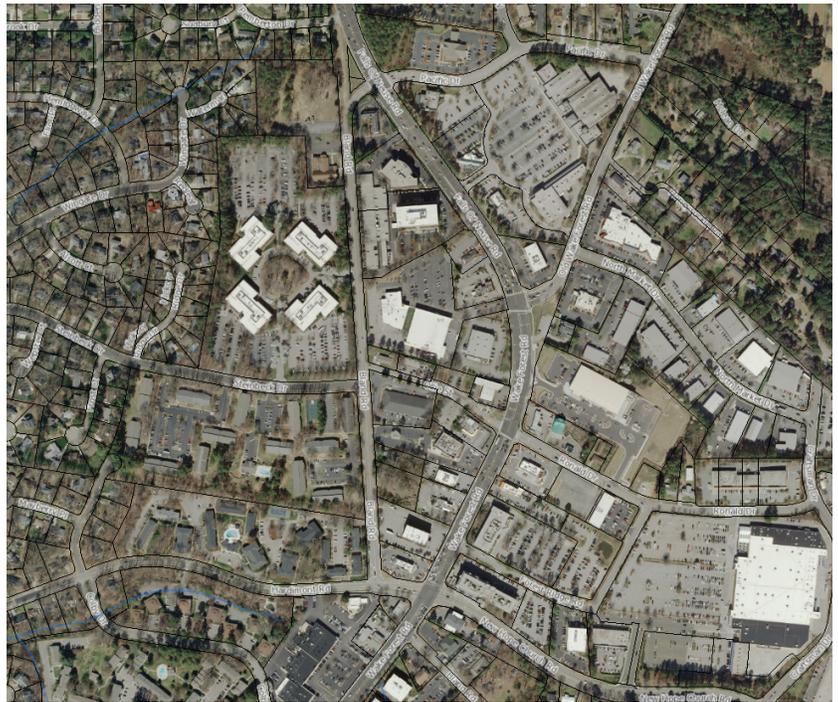
Wake Forest/Falls of Neuse	6	0	2
Atlantic/St. Albans	8	0	5
I-440 Crossing/Six Forks	8	0	2
Crabtree/Wake Forest	4	0	1
Community Enhancement/Higher Intensity Dev.	2	0	4
"Missing Middle" Housing	5	1	9

Land Use Focus Area: Wake Forest/Bland

The plan envisions the area between Wake Forest Road and Bland Road becoming a more walkable, mixed-use area. It proposes shifting uses east of Wake Forest from industrial to a mix of uses and permitting more commercial uses along Bland Road. Height would step down from seven stories to three at the edges.

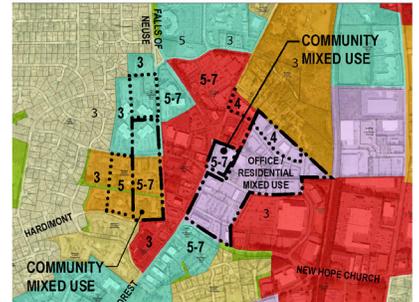
Input Summary

The concept received solid support (69 percent average agreement that it is a reasonable approach to creating a mix of uses; 71 percent that the height recommendation is reasonable).



WAKE FOREST / FALLS OF NEUSE

- GREATER MIX OF LAND USES
- HIGHER LAND USE INTENSITIES
- RETAIL FOCUS AREA
- IMPROVED WALKABILITY / MOBILITY



Input

Online input - Shift from industrial to housing/office/retail

Average 69 / 100



Online input - Height transition from seven stories at core to three at edges

Average



In-person input: Land use focus areas

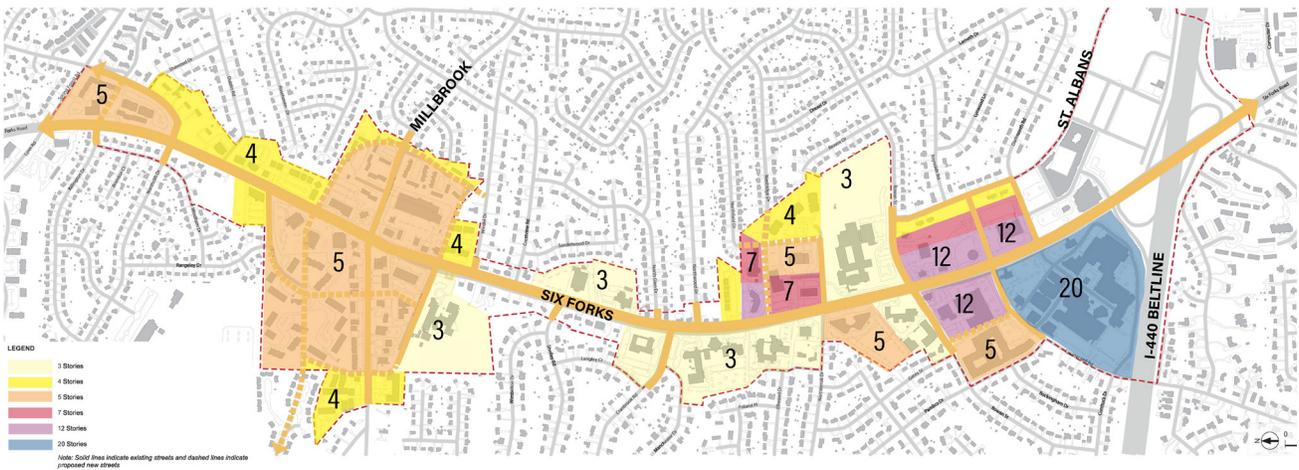
Wake Forest/Falls of Neuse	6	0	2
Atlantic/St. Albans	8	0	5
I-440 Crossing/Six Forks	8	0	2
Crabtree/Wake Forest	4	0	1
Community Enhancement/Higher Intensity Dev.	2	0	4
"Missing Middle" Housing	5	1	9

Six Forks Corridor Study

The Midtown plan process is also considering proposals first put forward during the Six Forks Corridor Study. That study concluded in 2017 with recommendations to widen the street to six lanes with a landscaped median and improved facilities for walking or bicycling. However, a consensus was not reached on land use and urban form proposals. The May-June input phase sought additional input. Primary proposals included:

- 1) Creating two primary mixed-use centers. A more intensive center at North Hills envisioned up to 20 stories on the west side of Six Forks. A lower-scale center at Millbrook envisioned five stories. In between, a detached houses would evolved into a lower-scale mix of residential and housing units.
- 2) Creating a more urban feel, with buildings closer to the street, at the two centers, and a parkway feel, with more landscaping between buildings and the street, in between.
- 3) Envisioning a more connected street network, showing where future connections could take place.

Height



Frontage and Street Connections



Source: Six Forks Corridor Study 2017 - City of Raleigh

Six Forks Corridor Study

In-person input

BUILDING HEIGHTS

Beltline to Rowan	16	70	7
Rowan to Cranbrook	2	6	3
Cranbrook to Millbrook	9	1	0
North of Millbrook	0	1	3

Online input

Six Forks height - 28 percent

Millbrook height 64 percent

Six Forks mix of uses - 87 percent

Northbrook area connections - 22 percent

Pamlico street connection - 50 percent

Input Summary

These concepts received highly varied input.

The 20-story recommendation without transition received highly negative feedback.



Allowing detached houses to evolve into three-story office and residential uses did receive support, as did the Millbrook height recommendation.



The Northbrook area street connections received highly negative feedback, while the Pamlico connection was more mixed.

